

Cities, Communities and Homes: Is the Urban Future Livable?

Microaree Programme: health, housing and community-building in Trieste

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5. Abstract:

This paper aims to present a Programme developed in Trieste (Italy), for the improvement of well-being conditions in certain deprived urban areas characterized by several problems related to health, housing and – in wider terms – social exclusion. The Programme provides the development of a *local welfare system* (Bifulco, 2015) thanks to inter-institutional *local* governance, and it is oriented to promote *community building* in these urban areas.

Community building can be identified as a key issue of urban regeneration, particularly in those urban areas afflicted by the abovementioned problems. Here, the regeneration of a deprived urban area is investigated from a perspective that gives an important role to two main issues: the inhabitant's needs, developing specific pathways focused on their *capabilities* (Sen, 1992), and the *territorialisation of social policies* (Bricocoli, 2007; Bifulco, 2015, *et. al.*), in order to integrate social, health and welfare policies within a single framework. This approach, aimed to improve the well-being of inhabitants, includes health care, housing conditions and the regeneration of neighbourhood into a *socio-health* policy-making.

According to this perspective, the paper illustrates *Microaree Programme*, which generated an improvement of living conditions in some significantly deprived urban areas of Trieste, the capital city of Friuli-Venezia Giulia Region, in the North-East of Italy. Since 2006, *MicroAree Programme* took place in the public social housing neighbourhoods of Trieste Municipality. The aim is to develop *community building* among the inhabitants of these peripheral areas, with an approach based on both social and health issues. The paper grounds its reflection into the inter-institutional policy-making developed for *MicroAree Programme*, with the aim to stress how it generated a process of urban regeneration adopting a policy-making that is focused on *welfare* provision rather than the *urban renewal*.

Additional part:

However, *MicroAree Programme* can be considered a best practice within an Italian context where the *local welfare* is fragmented rather than widespread. The effectiveness of a *local welfare system* depends on the local administrations' capacity and interest to develop an *integrated policy framework* where service provision and urban regeneration are analysed in a combined perspective. For instance, during the last decade, few Regions adopted the Law 328/2000 (*Framework Law for the implementation of integrated social service systems*) to develop an integrated *socio-health* system; therefore few *local welfare* experiences have been developed and maintained over the last years. *MicroAree Programme* was developed in a *virtuous region* of Northern Italy, where the economical resources are also higher than elsewhere in Italy (for instance, in Southern regions). Moreover, in Trieste the local administrations spent lot of efforts to develop the programme, accepting a challenge that implies a long-term process. The best practices from the present case study are not reproducible *a priori*, but are suitable in the light of the political-economic environment. Indeed, a partial reproduction of *MicroAree* took place in Milan with the Municipal Programme *Welfare di tutti* (*Welfare for everybody*), in a context where economic and political resources are currently more available than in other big cities, such as Rome, Palermo or Genoa, where the policy agenda faces other problems related to the *economic sustainability* of the city, hence *place-based* welfare service provision is not a priority. Therefore, the *MicroAree* case-study shows the strengths of an Italian local welfare system, in a framework where the potentialities of local welfare are not so exploited.